AP® Japanese Language and Culture

Curricular Requirements

CR1	The teacher uses Japanese almost exclusively in class and encourages students to do likewise.	*See page:* 2
CR2	The course provides opportunities for students to engage in interdisciplinary course content and develop skills through the six required units: Families and Communities, Language and Culture, Art and Creativity, Science and Technology, Contemporary Life, and Global Contexts.	*See page:* 2
CR3	Instructional materials include a variety of authentic audio, visual, and audiovisual sources and authentic written texts.	*See page:* 2
CR4	The course provides opportunities for students to practice and develop the skills in Skill Category 1: Comprehend written texts, audio, and visualizations of data, as outlined in the AP Course and Exam Description (CED). (Interpretive Mode)	*See page:* 2
CR5	The course provides opportunities for students to practice and develop the skills in Skill Category 2: Speak and write in interpersonal and presentational contexts, as outlined in the Course and Exam Description (CED). (Interpersonal and Presentational Modes)	*See page:* 3
CR6	The course provides opportunities for students to practice and develop the skills in Skill Category 3: Demonstrate cultural understanding, as outlined in the Course and Exam Description (CED). (Interpersonal and Presentational Modes)	*See page:* 4
CR7	The course prepares students to use Japanese in real-life situations.	*See page:* 6
CR8	The course provides students with opportunities to develop handwriting skills in all three Japanese writing systems: Japanese Hiragana, Katakana, and Kanji.	*See page:* 6
CR9	The course provides students with opportunities to develop keyboarding skills.	*See page:* 8
CR10	The course dedicates time and support to help students build analytical, research, presentation, and interpersonal skills necessary to complete the course project.	*See page:* 10

AP Japanese Language and Culture Sample Syllabus #2

Course Definition

AP® Japanese Language and Culture is an advanced-level course designed to develop students' proficiency in interpretive, interpersonal, and presentational communication while deepening their understanding of Japanese culture. **CR1** The course is conducted almost exclusively in Japanese, creating an immersion environment where students engage with authentic texts, tasks, and real-world applications.

Six Thematic Units

The course is designed around six thematic units that integrate language, interdisciplinary content, and culture to provide context and structure for students to develop their skills in the interpretive, presentational, and interpersonal modes of communication.

Unit 1: Families and Communities **CR2**

Students examine the Japanese family structure, community activities, and customs, and investigate how Japanese society utilizes the concept of inner/outer circles to establish social interactions, drawing on sources such as videos, survey reports, and news articles.

Authentic Sources **CR3**

- さざえさん, くれよんシンちゃん, あたしんち, 夏目友人帳 (anime)
- 君の名は (movie)
- NHK News
- "National Family Research of Japan." *National Institute of Population and Social Security Research*
- Commercial videos
- PTA newsletters (with text, tables, and graphics)
- こども食堂 Hiroshima Latest News and Documentary, 2021

Interpretive

- Create a relationship diagram to identify family members after watching clips of various anime. (Skill 1.A)
- Group discussion to determine the relationship between *senpai* (upper-level students) and *kohai* (lower-classmen) based on the speech style and attitude in the movie 君の名は. (Skill 1.B) **CR4**
- Think-pair-share to identify data on the National Family Research of Japan. (Skill 1.A)
- Create a graphic organizer of seasonal cards, *nengajo*, and seasonal gifts (*ochugen* and *oseibo*) to draw a logical conclusion about the importance of these customs in Japanese society after watching the commercial videos of these products. (Skill 1.C) **CR4**
- Group discussion to determine the intended audience and gather information in the video, 地域の活動について知っておこう, on the Tsunahiro website. (Skill 1.B)
- Identify the keywords and information in the PTA newsletter. (Skill 1.A)
- Answer the questions on a worksheet after watching the video こども食堂. (Skill 1.A, 1.C)

CR1
The syllabus must explicitly state that the course is conducted almost exclusively in Japanese.

CR2
The syllabus must explicitly list the six required course units and describe one or more sample activities and authentic sources per unit.

CR3
The syllabus includes at least one example of authentic materials from each of the following types of sources:
1. Audio
2. Visual
3. Audiovisual
4. Written/Print Literary
5. Written/Print Non-Literary

CR4
The syllabus must describe at least two activities designed to address at least one learning objective within Skill Category 1 using an authentic source.

Interpersonal

- Interview family members. Pair discussion comparing Japanese and U.S. family customs. (Skill 2.B, 2.C)
- Interview via email a Japanese exchange student about family customs. (Skill 2.B, 2.C) **CR5**
- Role play of *senpai* (upper-level students) and *kohai* (lower-classmen). (Skill 2.A, 2.B)
- Discuss and share opinions on こども食堂. (Skill 2.B, 2.D)
- Discuss findings and opinions on the Japanese *ohakamairi* and *ochugen* customs after watching 夏目友人帳. (Skill 2.A, 2.B, 2.C)

Presentational (Skill 4.A, 4.B)

- Role play a skit of giving and receiving a seasonal gift exchange, *ochugen* or *oseibo*. (Skill 2.A, 2.D)
- Give oral presentation on the similarities and differences between Japanese family customs and their own. (Skill 2.A, 2.D)
- Write a thank-you letter to a community member. (Skill 2.D)
- Create a *nengajo* (seasonal greeting card).

Cultural Understanding

- Compare and contrast the family members in anime from the 70s with those in current ones.
- Compare and contrast the similarities and differences between Japan and the students' own country's community activities, such as the PTA.

Handwriting/Keyboarding

- Write a handwritten thank-you letter to a community member.
- Handwrite a *nengajo* (seasonal greeting card) using a fudepen.

Unit 2: Language and Culture

Students will become familiar with the diversity of the Japanese language, research cultural and linguistic trends, and make predictions about future trends through classroom activities.

Authentic Sources

- "Japanese Map and Regional Infographics." *Geospatial Information Authority of Japan (GSI)*
- Movie scenes
- *Seventeen Japan* magazine
- "Line Message Transcripts," LINE Corporation 2023
- "Japanese TikTok Cultural Trend Clips," TikTok Japan, 2024
- "Youth Slang Blogs," Ameblo, 2024
- "Online Blogs on Slang and Youth Trends," Hatena Blog, 2024
- "Nengajo (New Year's Greeting Cards) Samples," *Japan Post*

CR5
The syllabus must describe one or more activities to demonstrate how each learning objective in Skill Category 3 is addressed.

Interpretive

- Practice listening comprehension using Japanese movies. (Skill 1.A)
- Infer the meaning of the dialect spoken in the highly contextualized scene in a movie. (Skill 1.C)
- Analyze slang in manga and magazines: Students will examine excerpts from manga and articles from *Seventeen Japan* to identify and interpret slang terms. (Skill 1.C)
- Comprehend the information in the LINE messages and infer the relationship between the sender and recipient. (Skill 1.A)
- Infer the meaning of the dialect from the context. (Skill 1.C)

Interpersonal

- Share the opinions on the Japanese dialect and its significance in pairs or small groups. (Skill 2.A, 2.B, 2.C)
- Role-play LINE conversations between friends, using emojis and casual form. (Skill 2.A, 2.B)
- Conversation simulating a travel plan and choosing the places to visit and things to do. (Skill 2.A, 2.B, 2.C)

Presentational

- Create a guidebook on the assigned region, including its climate, local cuisine, events, festivals, and other notable features. (Skill 2.D)
- Create a short video introducing their popular culture to Japanese students. (Skill 2.A, 2.C, 2.D)
- Poster presentation on trends in Japan. (Skill 2.C)
- Two-minute AP-style presentations covering cultural trends, along with predictions about future trends. (Skill 2.A, 2.C, 2.D)

Cultural Understanding

- Explore maps and photos to become familiar with the layout of Japan at the prefectural level. (Skill 3.A) **CR6**
- Compare indirectness in Japanese and directness in English through analysis of authentic materials. (Skill 3.A)
- Reflect on the significance of speech style in the Japanese language. (Skill 3.A)

CR6

The syllabus must describe one or more activities to demonstrate how each learning objective in Skill Category 3 is addressed.

Real-Life Application

- Write a blog entry for Japanese peers about U.S. youth culture: Students will compose a blog post using appropriate language forms, considering the cultural context of their audience.

Handwriting/Keyboarding

- Copy kanji from slang phrases: Students will practice writing kanji characters from slang expressions to reinforce their understanding of the characters.
- Type peer blog comments: Students will type responses to peer blog posts, utilizing appropriate language forms.

Unit 3: Art and Creativity

Students become more familiar with popular styles of art. They will examine different kinds of art that are not just limited to what can be found in museums, but also what they encounter in their daily lives.

Authentic Sources

- Bashō, Matsuo. *Oku no Hosomichi (Selected Haiku)*, 1689 anime shorts
- Ikebana tutorials
- "Seasonal Gift Advertisements (Ochugen and Oseibo)," *YouTube Japan Commercials*
- *Ukiyo-e Woodblock Prints*, Edo Period, Tokyo National Museum
- "Karesansui (Japanese Rock Garden)," Kyoto Zen Temples Photo Archive
- Manga artist interviews
- "Kabuki Performance," National Theatre of Japan, Tokyo, 2020
- "Nihon Buyo Dance Performance," National Theatre of Japan, 2021
- "Popular J-Pop Music Videos," *YouTube Japan Official*

Interpretive

- Practice listening comprehension using J-pop songs. (Skill 1.A)
- Draw a picture based on a haiku that includes seasonal references. (Skill 1.B)
- Identify the concepts of *wabi-sabi, shibui*, and *iki* by observing various art forms. (Skill 1.C)
- Find the main idea behind haikus written by various poets. (Skill 1.B)
- Matching activity to identify traditional art and its details. (Skill 1.A)
- Create a word web to connect adjective keywords to pop and traditional art. (Skill 1.A)

Interpersonal

- Survey a favorite artist and/or musician. (Skill 2.A, 2.B, 2.C)
- Ask questions about and provide their opinions on Ukiyo-e after seeing some famous works. (Skill 2.A, 2.B, 2.C)
- Simulated conversation in pairs on planning to go to Kabuki. (Skill 2.A, 2.B, 2.C)

Presentational

- Oral presentation of survey results using a chart. (Skill 2.A, 2.B, 2.C, 2.D)
- Create and present original haikus with commentary. (Skill 2.A, 2.B, 2.C)
- Gallery walk presentations on the products, practices, and perspectives of the Japanese art of their interest. (Skill 2.A, 2.B, 2.C)
- Create a video tutorial on how to create a work of art, such as origami, charaben, sashiko, etc. (Skill 2.A, 2.B)
- Post a positive comment on their favorite Japanese song's video on YouTube. (Skill 2.A, 2.B, 2.C)
- Write feedback on a peer's tutorial video. (Skill 2.C, 2.D)

Cultural Understanding

- Reflect on the products, practices, and perspectives of *wabi-sabi*, after practicing ikebana and/or observing the Japanese-style garden. (Skill 3.A)

Real-Life Application

- Visit (or virtually attend) a Japanese art exhibit and write a review in Japanese. **CR7**
- Invite an artist and have a cultural workshop.

Handwriting/Keyboarding

- Handwrite an original haiku using two or three writing systems. **CR8**
- Type an anime critique in blog format.
- Write calligraphy.

Unit 4: Science and Technology

Students explore how technology has affected both their daily lives and society.

Authentic Sources

- NHK Web Easy: 生成AIを使ったロボット
- NHKドキュメンタリー: "AIと高齢社会" – explores the impact of AI and robotics on eldercare in Japan
- *Asahi Shimbun* articles on social media trends, smartphone usage, and AI applications
- Pet robot
- Carerobot
- TEDxTokyo talks on Cinderella Technology

Interpretive

- Summarize the NHK documentary to determine the main idea and the points of view. (Skill 1.B)
- Identify data from Japanese news articles. (Skill 1.A)

Interpersonal

- Group Debate: "Does social media and AI improve or weaken human relationships?" Students use examples from YouTube videos, TEDx talks, and NHK documentaries to support their arguments. (Skill 2.B, 2.C)
- Discuss their opinion on the benefits and drawbacks of AI usage in their studies. (Skill 2.A, 2.B, 2.C)

Presentational

- Video or oral presentation: Students present a Japanese tech innovation (e.g., caregiving robots or AI apps) and explain its social and cultural impact. (Skill 2.A, 2.B, 2.D)
- Written reflection: Compose a short essay comparing Japanese and U.S. social media and AI usage, highlighting societal differences. (Skill 2.A, 2.C, 2.D)

CR7
The syllabus demonstrates that students use the Japanese in the classroom or beyond in real-life situations. Simply stating a list of real-life situations is not sufficient.

CR8
The syllabus must include at least one example describing how students practice handwriting Japanese Kanji, Hiragana, and Katakana using all three systems appropriately.

Cultural Understanding

- Compare Japanese and U.S. perspectives on AI and social media: Students discuss privacy concerns, societal acceptance, and ethical considerations. (Skill 3.A)
- Reflect on cultural attitudes toward technology in eldercare in writing. (Skill 3.A)

Real-Life Application

- Create an informational video in Japanese: Students explain a Japanese AI or social media trend to peers in the U.S., demonstrating practical use of language in real-world contexts.

Handwriting/Keyboarding

- Handwritten notes on key vocabulary and concepts from documentaries and articles.
- Typed summary and debate preparation using Japanese IME for kanji, hiragana, and katakana practice.

Unit 5: Contemporary Life

Students research the type of education needed to pursue their desired career path, both in their home country and in Japan. They examine how to prepare to build the multilingual skills necessary to flourish in the 21st century and explore the lifestyle of Japanese personnel.

Authentic Sources

- Recruit.co.jp job postings and career advice articles
- News articles on education and health issues
- Morning routine video
- *Tsunahiro* (医療制度について知っておこう)
- Tips for Tokyo Life (Japanese schools)
- PRTIMES (alternative school)
- Cookpad (bento)
- "Morning Routine in Japan." *YouTube*, uploaded by Japanese Vlogger, 2022,

Interpretive

- Find job information on a website. (Skill 1.A)
- Practice reading comprehension using a news article or website. (Skill 1.A)
- List tips for a healthy diet from the morning routine video. (Skill 1.A)
- Read and follow a recipe's instructions to create a bento lunch. (Skill 1.A)

Interpersonal

- Talk in conversation about each other's plans for the future. (Skill 2.A, 2.B, 2.C)
- Ask and respond to questions about high school life by exchanging messages with high school students in Japan. (Skill 2.A, 2.B, 2.C)
- Interview about daily routine in pairs or small groups. (Skill 2.A, 2.B, 2.C)
- Discussion of the benefits and drawbacks of school uniforms. (Skill 2.A, 2.B, 2.C)

Presentational

- A written essay that compares and contrasts the Japanese education system with the author's own. (Skill 2.C, 2.D)
- Make a chart or graph presenting the findings of a peer's daily routine. (Skill 2.C)
- Creation of a promotional video for a healthy life. (Skill 2.A, 2.B, 2.C, 2.D)

Cultural Understanding

- Compare Japanese school life and students' own lives. (Skill 3.A)
- Reflect on the impact of the Japanese diet on health. (Skill 3.A)

Real-Life Application

- Plan an educational and career path.
- Make an action plan to achieve an educational goal.
- Reflect on their diet and lifestyle.
- Make bento lunch.

Handwriting/Keyboarding

- Type messages to Japanese students incorporating kanji, hiragana, and katakana using IME. **CR9**

Unit 6: Global Contexts

Students explore the facets of life that have undergone changes, using news sources to inform their understanding.

Authentic Sources

- What are culture, interculture, and multicultural coexistence?
  文化、異文化、多文化共生とは.
- What is Simple Japanese? やさしい日本語とは
- Do you like the town you live in? Children's ideas for town-building too! (住んでいるまちは好きですか？子どもたちのまちづくりアイデアも!) *Research Institute for Children*.
- *Gakken x Asahi Newspaper*. How and when was Japan (the Japanese Archipelago) created? (日本(列島)はいつごろどうやってできたの)
- Transportation (交通機関) *Japan Foundation*.
- Japan Foundation. (電車の乗り方)
- *Keio Dentetsu*. Keita's Train Safety and Etiquette Lesson
  (けい太くんの電車の安全・マナー教室)

Interpretive

- Read the article about multicultural coexistence and summarize how it defines culture, interculture, and multicultural coexistence. (Skill 1.A)
- While considering the meaning of the word *yasashii* (kind, gentle, easy, and simple), identify examples of simplified expressions and rewrite a few difficult sentences in *Yasashii Nihongo*. (Skill 1.A)
- Read the children's research article and highlight words and phrases describing community and town-building. Identify the main idea and supporting details that explain what makes a town enjoyable. (Skill 1.B)

CR9
The syllabus must include at least one example describing how students use a standard keyboard to type Japanese Kanji, Hiragana, and Katakana to create text in Japanese. Students must be able to identify desired Kanji(s) correctly after they complete typing a phonetic transcription of the text using Input Method Editor.

- Read the article about how Japan was formed. Identify key details and explain how Japan came to be called what it is today. (Skill 1.A)
- Watch the video explaining train systems such as IC cards. Note step-by-step instructions for buying tickets and boarding trains. Then create a short summary chart of the process. (Skill 1.A)
- Watch the Keita-kun safety video and list all the manners and safety rules introduced. Identify which are unique to Japan and explain why they are important. (Skill 1.A)

Interpersonal

- In pairs or small groups, discuss which ideas from the "Do You Like the Town You Live In?" article could improve your own community. Compare cultural differences in the concept of town-building between the Japanese context and your local community's. (Skill 2.A, 2.B, 2.C)
- Role-play scenario where one student is a foreign tourist and the other is a Japanese local explaining how to ride trains safely and politely (using phrases learned from the Keita video). (Skill 2.A, 2.B, 2.C)
- Role-play interviews: Students simulate interviews with NGO workers or local community volunteers (via video or text), practicing respectful *keigo* and casual forms as appropriate. (Skill 2.A, 2.B, 2.C, 2.D)

Presentational

- Using insights from the article, students design a poster showing children's ideas for improving their community. They compare these with ideas from their own community, highlighting shared goals and values. (Skill 2.A, 2.B, 2.C, 2.D)
- After studying videos on transportation, students create an instructional video for visitors explaining how to ride trains safely and politely. They should include train etiquette, IC card use, and cultural manners. (Skill 2.A, 2.B, 2.C, 2.D)

Cultural Understanding

- Compare how Japan and your home country define or practice multicultural coexistence. Consider themes like communication style and public awareness.
- Students use a Venn diagram to compare Japanese and U.S. transportation manners based on the videos. They identify both shared values (e.g., safety, courtesy) and unique Japanese customs (e.g., quietness, queuing). (Skill 3.A)
- Students compare community engagement in Japan with how local youth in their own country participate in civic or community activities. They discuss what these differences reveal about social values. (Skill 3.A)

Real-Life Application

- Students reflect on how ideas from Japanese transportation, town-building, and technological innovation relate to their own communities. For instance, how can multicultural society promote safety or community design to make life welcoming to everyone? (Skill 3.A, 3.B)

Handwriting/Keyboarding

- Handwritten brainstorming notes typed final project proposal.

Course Project (AP Exam)

To prepare for the project components of the AP exam, at least fifteen 45-minute class periods are required during the spring semester. **CR10**

Components

- Conduct research
- Written reflection questions (Skill 1.D, 4.C)
- Personalized Project Reference
- Practice Project Presentation (Skill 4.A, 4.B)
- Practice Project Q&A (Skill 3.C)

CR10
The syllabus must include an explicit statement confirming that at least fifteen 45-minute class periods, or their equivalent, are dedicated to the course project (as outlined in the Course Project Manual). In particular, time must be specifically dedicated to research, guiding students through creating a written reflection, completing a Personalized Project Reference, and practice of the Project Presentation and Project Q&A.